

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LUANDA 01063 01 OF 02 061526Z

53

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3103

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUANDA 1063

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI AO PO

SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE MILITARY SITUATION AND PLANS IN ANGOLA

1. SUMMARY. THE PORTUGUESE ARMY HAS ENDED THE RECRUITMENT OF BLACK TROOPS AND REDUCED FROM 24 TO 18 MONTHS THE OVERSEAS TOUR OF DUTY FOR METROPOLITAN PORTUGUESE TROOPS. AS A RESULT THERE WILL BE A DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TROOPS THE ARMY HAS AVAILABLE IN ANGOLA. FNLA IS INCREASING ITS ARMED STRENGTH IN VIOLATION OF THE CEASE FIRE ACCORD. THE HIGH COMMAND HERE TELLS US MERCENARIES ARE BEING RECRUITED BY WHITE DISSIDENTS IN JOHANNESBURG FOR POSSIBLE USE IN ANGOLA. END SUMMARY.

2. ON DECEMBER FOUR A CONGEN OFFICER DISCUSSED THE MILITARY SITUATION WITH COMMANDANTE MARINS E SILVA, THE INFORMA-
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PAGE 02 LUANDA 01063 01 OF 02 061526Z

TION OFFICER

AT THE HIGH COMMAND AND A CONSISTENTLY RELIABLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION IN THE PAST. HIS REMARKS ARE SUMMARIZED IN THE PARAGRAPHS THAT FOLLOW.

3. BLACK TROOPS: THE RECRUITMENT OF BLACK AND WHITE ANGOLANS HAS CEASED AND THE TRAINING SCHOOLS IN NOVA LISBOA ARE CLOSING DOWN THIS WEEK, AS THE LAST RECRUITS ARE GRADUATED. SOME BLACK TROOPS HAVE BEEN GIVEN AN EARLY DISCHARGE, PRIMARILY THOSE WHO ARE DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS. FIVE COMPANIES OF ALL BLACK TROOPS, INCLUDING OFFICERS, HAVE NOW BEEN ESTABLISHED AS PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN TO CREATE ITS NUCLEUS OF A BLACK ARMY. THREE ARE IN LUANDA, ONE IN NOVA LISBOA AND ONE IN SA DA BANDEIRA. ALL PATROLLING IN BLACK AREAS IN LUANDA IS DONE BY BLACK TROOPS, WITH WHITE TROOPS PROVIDING CORDONS BETWEEN THE WHITE AND BLACK AREAS OF THE CITY.

4. ANGOLAN ARMY: NO FURTHER ACTION WILL BE TAKEN ON AN ANGOLAN ARMY UNTIL AFTER THE "SUMMIT" CONFERENCE IN PORTUGAL OF THE LEADERS OF THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT, AT WHICH THE ARMY WILL BE A MAIN ISSUE. THE PORTUGUESE ARE WILLING TO DO WHATEVER THE LIBERATION CHIEFS DECIDE, WHETHER IT BE THE USE OF BLACK TROOPS AS THE NUCLEUS OF A NEW ANGOLAN ARMY OR THE DISMISSAL OF ALL NON-CAREER BLACK SOLDIERS IN ANGOLA, LEAVING AN ALL-WHITE GARRISON FOR THE PROVINCE. THE PROSPECT OF THE LIBERATION CHIEFS AGREEING NOW ON SUCH A KEY QUESTION AS THE SHAPE OF THE FUTURE ARMY IS UNLIKELY, SAID MARTINS E SILVA, AND IT IS PROBABLE THAT THE PORTUGUESE WILL KEEP THE MORE DEPENDABLE BLACK TROOPS IN THE RANKS UNTIL THEY ARE DUE FOR DISCHARGE OR SOME FUTURE COALITION GOVERNMENT DECIDES ON THEIR DISPOSITION.

5. REPLACEMENTS FOR WHITE TROOPS: SINCE OVERSEAS SERVICE HAS BEEN REDUCED FROM 24 TO 18 MONTHS, THERE IS AN UNUSUALLY LARGE NUMBER OF PORTUGUESE TROOPS DUE FOR ROTATION. TAP DOES NOT HAVE ADEQUATE CAPACITY TO RETURN ALL THESE TROOPS TO PORTUGAL AND THE ARMY REQUISITIONED A PORTUGUESE PASSENGER LINE, THE INFANTE DOM HENRIQUE, TO TAKE 2000 TROOPS HOME. THIS CAUSED A GREAT OUTCRY FROM 1600 WHITES WHO HAD BOOKED PASSAGE, AND A COMPROMISE SOLUTION TO TRANSPORT SOME TROOPS AND SOME CIVILIANS WAS REACHED. ONE CURRENT RUMOR IS THAT THE ARMY PLANNED TO ROTATE ALL WHITE TROOPS NOW IN ANGOLA BY NEXT APRIL BECAUSE THEY HAD PERFORMED SO POORLY, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LUANDA 01063 01 OF 02 061526Z

HAD VERY LOW MORALE AND BECAUSE THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (MFA) WANTED NEW, MORE POLITICALLY DEPENDABLE TROOPS FROM PORTUGAL. MARTINS E SILVA DENIED ANY PLANS FOR SUCH A SWEEPING TURNOVER, SAYING THAT NORMAL ROTATIONAL POLICIES WILL BE FOLLOWED EXCEPT FOR THE BULGE CAUSED BY THE SIX MONTH CUT IN OVERSEAS SERVICE. HE ADMITTED THAT THEY COULD NOT IMMEDIATELY REPLACE ALL THE TROOPS NOW GOING HOME AND SAID THERE WOULD BE A SHORTFALL OF SEVERAL THOUSAND MEN BELOW AUTHORIZED STRENGTH LEVELS FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS

6. CABINDA: PORTUGUESE TROOP DISPOSITION, BUT NOT FORCE LEVELS, ARE TO BE DRASTICALLY CHANGED IN THE ENCLAVE. UNTIL NOW THE PORTUGUESE HAD A BATTALION APIECE ASSIGNED TO THE NORTHERN CABINDA TOWNS OF DINGE, BUCO-ZAU AND BELIZE. THIS ARE IS NOW ALSO OCCUPIED BY MPLA AND THE HIGH COMMAND HAS DECIDED TO REDUCE THE GARRISON TO ONE COMPANY EACH, LEAVING, IN EFFECT, ONLY ONE BATTALION IN THE NORTH AND MOVING THE OTHER TWO TO AREAS OF FLEC INFLUENCE IN NORTHWESTERN AND SOUTHERN CABINDA. IN REGARD TO THE INCIDENTS AT MASSABI THE COMMANDANTE SAID THAT CONGO BRAZZAVILLE HAS CLAIMED IT WASN'T INVOLVED, BUT THAT HE FOUND THIS HARD TO BELIEVE. BRAZZAVILLE HAS NOT YET RETURNED THE HOSTAGES CAPTURED BY FLEC AND TAKEN TO THE CONGO WHEN THE REBELS ABANDONED MASSABI IN THE FACE OF A PORTUGUESE ASSAULT. HE HAS NO IDEA WHEN THE HOSTAGES WILL BE RELEASED BUT HOPES IT WILL BE SOON.

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PAGE 01 LUANDA 01063 02 OF 02 061527Z

53

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LUANDA 1063

7. FNLA: DESPITE A PROVISION IN THE TRUCE ACCORD WITH FNLA PROHIBITING REINFORCEMENT OF TROOPS, HE SAID FNLA WAS MOVING MORE MEN INTO NORTHERN ANGOLA. HE ALSO ADMITTED THEY HAD LANDED TWO 727S WITH ARMED MEN IN LUANDA, OSTENSIBLY TO GUARD THEIR HEADQUARTERS HERE. HE NOW ESTIMATES FNLA HAS 400-500 TRAINED, ARMED SOLDIERS IN THE CAPITAL. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, HE SAID FNLA IS COOPERATING WITH THE ARMY IN MAINTAINING RURAL SECURITY. THE PRESS OF DECEMBER FOUR REPORTED THAT FNLA CAPTURED A BAND OF 87 BANDITS WHO HAD BEEN TERRORIZING WHITE FARMERS IN THE SALAZAR AREA FOR A MONTH. THE COMMANDANTE SAID FNLA TURNED THE BANDITS OVER TO THE ARMY FOR TRIAL.

8. MERCENARIES: ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDANTE, THREE ANGOLAN WHITES ARE IN SOUTH AFRICA RECRUITING MERCENARIES FOR SERVICE IN ANGOLA. HE IDENTIFIED THE MEN AS JOAQUIM FERRONHA, THE FORMER CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LUANDA 01063 02 OF 02 061527Z

HEAD OF THE CHRISTIAN-DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF ANGOLA (PCDA) AND ORGANIZER OF AN UNDERGROUND WHITE ARMY WHO WAS IMPLICAGED IN THE SEPTEMBER 28 EVENTS IN LISBON AND FORCED TO FLEE; RUY CORREIA FREITAS, FORMER PUBLISHER OF ANGOLA'S LEADING NEWSPAPER, A PROVINCIA, AND A HEAVY BANKROLLER OF THE PCDA WHO WAS ALSO COM-PROMISED BY THE SEPT 28 HAPPENINGS; AND FORMER LT COL SANTOS E CASTRO, BROTHER OF THE LAST GOVERNOR GENERAL OF ANTOLA UNDER CAETANO AND HIMSELF FORMER GOVERNOR OF THE DISTRICT OF CUANZA-NORTE IN ANGOLA. THE COMMANDANTE ADMITTED THESE MEN WERE HAVING SOME SUCCESS IN RAISING A MERCENARY FORCE IN JOHANNESBURG BUT SAID HE DID NOT THINK THAT THE ENTRANCE OF MERCENARIES INTO ANGOLA WAS IMMINENT.

9. CHANGE IN COMMAND: GENERAL PINTO DE MAGALHAES, A MEMBER OF THE FORMER JUNTA HERE AND HEAD OF THE ARMY IN ANGOLA WILL RETURN SHORTLY TO LISBON. HE IS TO BE REPLACED BY BRIGADIER, SOON TO BE GENERAL, ERNESTO FERREIRA DE MACEDO, FORMER GOVERNOR OF MOXICO DISTRICT AND COMMANDER OF THE EASTERN MILITARY ZONE IN ANGOLA. THE COMMANDANTE SAID THE TRANSFER IS ROUTINE, AS MAGALHAES HAD COMPLETED HIS TOUR IN ANGOLA IN SEPTEMBER AND ONLY STAYED ON BE-CAUSE OF HIS ROLE IN THE JUNTA. BRIGADIER THEMUDO BARATA, THE FORMER GOVERNOR OF CABINDA, WHO WAS SACKED BY HIS OWN TROOPS IN THE MINI-COUP THERE IN NOVEMBER, HAS NOW DEPARTED FOR LISBON. HE WILL BE GIVEN THE OPTION OF REMAINING IN THE SERVICE OR RETIRING, BUT IT APPEARS THE ARMY HOPES HE WILL DO THE HONORABLE THING.

10. MORALE: MARTINS SAID MORALE IS ON THE UPSWING. THE MFA HAS ORGANIZED TEAMS OF OFFICERS, NCO'S AND ENLISTED MEN TO VISIT THE UNITS TO TRY TO RE-ESTABLISH A SENSE OF DISCIPLINE AND RESPON-SIBILITY. OTHER SOURCES TELL US MORALE AND DISCIPLINE ARE POOR WITH THE ARMY DIVIDED BETWEEN THOSE WHO WANT TO GO HOME NOW, REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES AND THOSE WHO FEEL THEY HAVE A

DUTY TO THEIR FELLOW PORTUGUESE TO PROVIDE SECURITY AND DEFEND
THEIR INTERESTS DURING THIS DIFFICULT PERIOD. JUDGING FROM THE
TROOPS APPEARANCE, DEMEANOR AND RECENT LACK OF WILL TO FIGHT, THE
MORALE IS PROBABLY LOWER THAN THE HIGH COMMAND WANTS TO ADMIT.
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